

# Anapanasati

## Factors of concentration

- Engaging effectively with the first tetrad develops concentration, characterised by
  - Vitaka: bringing to mind / turning one's attention to
  - Viccāra: bearing in mind / keeping one's attention on
  - Pīti: physical pleasure, satisfaction, rapture
  - Sukha: mental happiness, enjoyment, bliss
  - Ekagata: one-pointedness of mind
- When all 5 factors are present we recognize that we are absorbed (in dhyana)
- At any particular time we can beneficially check for their presence, how we are experiencing them, and the effect they are having on our state of mind
- Not trying to attain/manufacture/get in to a particular state of mind/having a fixed idea of what we want to achieve
- Valuing, attending, opening to what is actually there. Not trying to get somewhere else
- Looking for particular experience: like tuning a radar – and patiently looking for a blip
- An habitual approach of striving / pushing and work/goal orientation is counterproductive: we can sabotage the process through
  - Forcing / pushing / willing
  - Over conceptualizing
- We need to learn to be patient with what is there: attending to that like a gardener tending flowers or a snail climbing a wall
- Vitaka and Viccāra are usually translated as initial and sustained thought. However, anapanasati is not a reflection practice but a development of attention.
- We develop vitaka and viccāra through exploring the duration, location, and quality of the breath in the first tetrad
- As a fruition of this engagement, the pleasant vedanas of pīti and sukha may arise

## Pīti

Pleasure, satisfaction, rapture – felt in the body. As tensions are released, energy is freed up and felt directly as stimulating, vibrant sensation. Pīti begins with a sense of physical well-being and ease and a vibrancy or tingling

## Sukha

Happiness, enjoyment, bliss – felt in the mind. It begins as a gentle quality of lightness and ease, calm and soothing. Sukha is a deep current in the mind-stream: we may initially not recognize that it is there because we are accustomed to attending to the surface disturbance of our minds.

- It is good to look for, discover, and become familiar with pīti and sukha in their emergent forms, and as they develop.
- It is helpful to look at the nuance and visceral feeling tone around them and to attend to them a while: this establishes them

- Recognizing and cultivating them loosens our dependence on external sources of sense pleasure and enables and motivates us to engage more fully and deeply with meditation
- In a traditional simile: priti is the pleasure of first discovery of an oasis in the desert to a thirsty traveller; sukha the contentment of sitting in the cool shade after quenching their thirst

## Ekagata

One-pointedness of mind: the capacity to bring focus and attention to an object, to stay present and attend to our experience. Akin in this respect to vicara, but more integrated: man in his wholeness wholly attending.

## Stage 5: Attentive to priti | breath in / out

This is akin to stage 3: attentive to the whole body, but this time particularly to the feeling tone of physical experience. We apply vitaka and vicara so that we become more concentrated and look for priti: attuning our radar to this particular vedana. Noting when it is present, not worrying when it is not.

## Stage 6: Attentive to sukha | breath in / out

Akin to stage 5, but now attentive to the mind-body: the whole experience of mind and mental activity, experiencing this in the field of awareness that is our body. Again, we apply vitaka and vicara so that we become more concentrated and look for sukha within our state of mind, attuning our radar to this particular vedana, noting when it is present, not worrying when it is not.

## Stage 7: Attentive to the mind-conditioner | breath in / out

The teaching here is that feelings condition our state of mind, just as the quality of our breath conditions our state of body. Feelings are the mind-conditioner: citta-sanskaram. In this stage we attend to the influence our vedana is having on our state of mind.

- Priti will tend to bring energy, zest
- Sukha will tend to bring calm, tranquillity
- Both will lead to
  - Kammanatata: flexibility, pliancy, responsiveness without floppiness
  - Samahitata: steadiness, firmness without rigidity
  - Samadhi: concentration, absorption, dhyana

## Stage 8: Calming the mind-conditioner | breath in / out

Allowing our experience of vedana to be integrated, absorbed, assimilated. Effective engagement with the earlier stages will establish a momentum. Here, as with stage 4 we are relaxing into the practice, allowing the momentum to unfold. More of a not-doing than a doing.